

[James Kerby Ward]

26077

January 3, [1930?]

Rev. [W. C. Sale?] (White)

[?] East Bay Street

Jacksonville, Florida

Preacher and Missionary

Mrs. Lillian [?], writer

[???] and

Robert Edwards, revisers. 3344 words

REVEREND [W. C. SALE?]

For 16 years the Reverend [W. C. Sale?] has been a well know figure in the religious life of Jacksonville. He was pastor of the [?] Street Baptist Church for 14 years, and now conducts the Jacksonville Citadel Mission at [26?] East Bay Street, where he [serves refreshments?] twice daily to anyone attending after services, and coffee throughout the day. He also conducts WPA adult education classes in the Mission.

He is six feet tall, weighs 150 pounds, and is a slender muscular type. His high forehead is topped with thick dark brown hair sprinkled with gray. He wears glasses, and his heavy eyebrows shade clear blue eyes, which look directly at you with a benign expression.

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Neatly attired, his tie, handkerchief and suit appeared to have been selected with a sense of color harmony.

Upon entering the Mission, I find his smile arresting and his hand-clasp firm. Before seating himself at his desk, which is in front of the room, he motions me to a [??] settee. The Mission consists of one room on the second floor of the Trout building, and old commercial structure one block from the waterfront. The walls of the room are badly in need of paint, and although the furniture is well arranged, its general appearance could be improved by cleaning. A large, [blue?], gallon coffee pot shows unmistakable signs of constant use. A piano, the most impressive furnishing, shows a little sign of wear. Our conversation is postponed by the crowding 2 stairs in the old building.

“At present I am using one large room not only as a classroom and employment agency but as a place where hungry may come and dine; where tired may sit and rest; and where troubled may tell their needs.

“This is no church, no hotel lobby, nor is it a flop-house; it is a spot where [men can?] feel free to come and find immediate aid. I am proud of the fact that help is instantly given with no prolonged investigation. This present location, which I recently acquired, is ideal because it is convenient to the greatest number who might seek aid. Being near the harbor and only a few blocks from the heart of the city, I am able to help men in all walks of life. I plan to redecorate the Mission and expect to be able to acquire a smaller adjoining room for use as a kitchen.” I explained the purpose of my interview, and he readily responded: “I will be glad to share whatever material of value I can furnish.

“I will tell you the story of my life in one sentence. I was born in Alabama, reared in Tennessee, an Oregon exile, a Virginian by adoption, a Kentuckian by permission, an overseas chaplain, and a Floridian by migration. [?] I have stayed, and not gone north in the summer; I have stuck or maybe I am stuck, perhaps both.

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"My father and mother married shortly after the war between the states, and reared seven girls and three boys on a farm. All learned self-support, self-respect, and self-control. We owned our own [house?], and helped father pay for it. I made the last payment on it one year after his death in 1904. You know it is easier for thrifty parents to 264 3 rear a large family than it is to rear a small one—that is it used to be, and I believe it is yet. It should be the ambition of every young married couple to have 18 children.

"The [Sales?] for several generations have pointed with pride to lawyers, doctors and preachers in their ranks. The pastor of the first Methodist church in this city back in 1893 was my father's first cousin of whom he often [spoke?] with pride, and I understand that Rev. J. C. Sale was a good preacher. Many of his family still live in Florida today. Judge Sale, lives in [?], Florida. My people come from the British Isles by way of Virginia, thence to the south and west. There are so few of us that we are willing to [??] when we meet. "I went through grammar school in Tennessee and later took five years in the Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, with special courses in oratory and theology. graduating in June, 1904." At this point Mr. Sale shows me the gold star he wears on his watch chain, the gift of the faculty for being an honor student.

"A few years later while pastor in Richmond, Va., I took two years of special work in Union Theological Seminary, an excellent Presbyterian school. That is unusual for a Baptist to attend a Seminary of another denomination, but I found it to be a good thing. It makes one broader, more considerate, and a better thinker. I seriously doubt that our present school system is turning out educated boys and girls. They all go through the mill and graduate. I do not see how they do it. But I presume education has been so popularized that it has become a game and they play the thing through. Then they make a larger appeal to the [275?] 4 eye by means of maps, charts, pictures, and demonstrations [than they once?] did. I think I have heard that about [?] percent of what we learn comes through the eye.

"One must be ambitious, with high ideals, in order to raise the grade in life. Much of this depends upon vision. 'Where there is no vision the people perish.' I made my response to

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the first awakening of conscience. I answered the call of God! To be a christian! To be a [minister?!] To live for others! I have had many experiences in what is known as the spirit-filled life.

“My ambition has never been to accumulate wealth. I like the good [???], but have always expected them to come as a result of [?] services for others. I have understood that if one lives for others he need not fear; he will be cared for. But I have learned that one must be a good financier if he succeeds in life. One must keep the home fires burning if he is to entertain strangers. Certainly one must live within his income and not try to keep up with the [?]. One must [either?] own a home or pay rent if he never owns a car. I have owned two cars that I bought and paid for and wore out. I am convinced that two-thirds [of the people?] driving cars do not need them, and would be better off without them. This is evidently true of people living in the city where transportation is easily [?].

When you [speak?] of income you make me laugh. It is better to laugh, [?], than to cry. Our first income in [?] was [??], and we lived in a furnished house. That was out in [?], Oregon, this side of the [??????] in the [?] [283?] 5 section of the west, where one feels most excellent, but where your dreams are a long time coming true. But if you go from the South to the Pacific Coast you must learn as quickly as possible to fit in.

“At one time my income was \$4,000 per year, but like all the rest I had my reverses. The hardest pull financially of my life has been during my sojourn in Jacksonville. But I guess I am to blame. If I had [hustled?] for a larger church it would have been different. But I am stronger because of my struggles. I would say that not less than \$100 a month will provide adequately for a husband and wife today in Jacksonville. I know many live on less than that, but it is a hard pull.

“The supreme right of man is the right to live and the right to work, and the right to show the marks of a man. Nothing is more honorable than work. [We?] should never be satisfied with our system in the [social?] order, until it provides every eligible man with work. Capital

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and labor must cooperate, with this slogan, "work for every man and every man at work." I was taught to work, and have worked ever since. I do not work for the amount of money I receive but for the joy there is in it, for the good I may be able to do, for what I may be able to accomplish through the work.

"My mission work is soul-satisfying and gives me a complete feeling of effort well spent. When I lie down in my bed at night, perhaps a little weary from the physical strain of the day, I am able to find full compensation when I review the events of the day and know that tonight there are former discouraged, depressed and hungry men because of my work

"The earnest desire of my life has been to relieve suffering humanity 287 6 and to meet the needs of my brother-man. In this field I am able to reach the man furthestest down — the man that won't come to church is the hungry man, and the man mad bitter because of some possible experience with a church-goer, and the man that can't make a decent appearance because of unemployment.

"Christ went after the man that was furthestest down and that is my aim, but the churches are not after that class today, they want a well-dressed crowd on parade. I am not sure that you will find very much Christianity, of the primitive type, among the churches today. Christ was moved with compassion for the multitudes. I am wondering what Christ thinks of the churches of this age.

"Getting back to my mission, for more than a hundred years Jacksonville has been merely a commercial city. But many things have converged to make it so. She has an ideal location on the historic St. Johns, with the best harbor, with the advantage of sea and land for transportation, undisturbed by storm and fog. Ours is the subtropical climate luring people from the North, to the [commerce?] of the South. We take off our hats to the past as we salute the men that planned and built our city, in spite of famine and fires, wars and fatal diseases. All praise to municipal ownerships of the waterworks, the electric light

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plant, certain docks, the stadium, radio, and many other projects that make for the financial success of our great city.

“Yes, we are happy to praise the police and fire departments, the park and sanitary departments, recreation department, great school system and our magnificent churches for their great cultural and spiritual 251 7 program, but there is no provision for helping the man that is down on his luck. We have welfare agencies that are doing a great work but they must adhere to specified rule and follow-up investigations. That is why I prefer to continue this mission, for I am able to immediately aid the man that is detached — the man that really needs a friend.

“A mission is the only institution I know that reaches the man that is down in the most effectual way without embarrassing him.

“This is the only agency in the city that gives direct relief immediately; including medical aid and everything that one man may be able to do for another without charge. Everything is absolutely free, with no strings tied to it, except the promise to be a real man try for self-support and self-control.

“A mission enables one to work with his hands untied, and [untrem?], using his own lost judgement, without interference on the part of outsiders. It is a simple problem—not complex.

“The great needs for such a mission are:

“First: it relieves suffering men out of work, that is no fault of their own in most cases. They are stranded and absolutely alone. They need a helping hand to find health, to find work, to find God, and to find their proper place in the social order.

“Second: so many people come to Florida, both tourist and transients, one with money and the other without. They both have the same purpose in that they are seeking ‘life, liberty

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and the pursuit of happiness.' The tourist looks out for himself. The transient must have [some?] one help him on his way. 253

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"Third: 'the poor are always with us' and there will always be room for this kind of work.

"Fourth: sudden relief is greatly needed for [?] in Jacksonville. Seamen are our second navy, our [ambassadors?] of good will. "All food is a contribution which I have promoted by contacting business heads and organizations. We generally have sufficient food for all.

"I feel that in this mission work I am able to stop crime at its source to a great extent. A hungry man will commit a crime quicker than a man that has three regular meals each day. We are told that hunger is the greatest human urge. "I am convinced that the mission work has relieved the burden and gloom from many a lonely, helpless, struggling soul. This is evidently true with some men past 60. They [say?] that cold harsh treatment makes [men?] [?]. And that is divinely true. Hear David saying, 'Thy [gentleness?] hath made me great.' And Paul saying, 'The love of Christ constraineth me.' And the song writer saying, 'Love lifted me.'

"I am fully convinced that the ministry of this mission is surpassing the work of the prison farms and all that is connected with them.

The new approach to the cure of crime is not punishment, but mercy, kindness and instruction. We are called upon to be real builders in the kingdom of God.

"The best advertisement that could come to this city is that even drifting men that come this way go their way saying 'Jacksonville has a heart of love.' That is the 13,000,000 [?] of American 243 9 are saying about our city, who were represented here in their National Baptist Convention two years ago. That is what 8,000 white men are saying who have been cared for in our Jacksonville city mission during the past twelve months.

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"We have not only met their physical and spiritual need, but during the past year we have taught the following topics: 'History of Florida,' 'History of the United States,' 'American [? Myths?];' 'The Power of the President;' 'Red Cross First Aid;' 'World Patriots;' 'The New Frontiers of Democracy;' 'Hygiene or How to Live;' 'Communism, Fascism, Dictatorship versus Democracy;' 'The Rights of Man;' which are the right to live, and the right to work and the right to show the marks of a man. We carried on an independent course of study without a book, on self-respect, and self-control. We are now studying the history of Jacksonville, featuring the thought of building a greater city.

"We have found, too, in the study of human relationships is an inexhaustible source of which each and every man can take a part. We, also, very frequently have round table discussions of current events. Reflecting a moment I recall that 'How to Prevent War' was a most interesting topic. The forum plan of discourse and teaching is the best that I have tried. This plan calls for the selection of a topic by the class, and the teacher giving the first short introductory address, giving all the class a chance to ask further questions and discuss the question in hand.

"I am interested in making every man's living conditions as good as we enjoy at home. The government is doing a remarkable thing for both white and colored on housing projects of Jacksonville.

"My wife is from one of the oldest families in Memphis, Tennessee, 260 12 makes a few miscellaneous observations, as I look at myself in the [glass?] and [see?] the house I live in 'by the side of the road I try to be a friend to man.'

"Who gets nowhere without a plan, a blue print that he makes for himself, if he is capable; if not capable, follow some one else's blue print. A free [?] has started no [?] and certainly will get nowhere. I plan [??] I get up in the morning. In fact, thinking on plans and programs is the thing that brings me from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

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"I am in the great movement. First: I am in the kingdom of God movement, with all the lovers of the Lord, I am in adult education work under the Works Progress Administration, which is definitely here to stay. If the [WPA?] should cease to be, adult education would go right up in one form or another, by one [agency?] or the other. It is a fellowship forum with at least a hundred thousand of them in America. It is a field all its own, that must be [?] daily. [And?] if properly pursued it will defeat every [?] that may [?] our [?], such as Communism, and Fascism. Were to teach men to plow and plant, cultivate and harvest. [We?] practice [and teach?] that one must spend some time each day in the results of the beautiful, and in the field of fruits and fun. Yes, we must have places of [announcement?], wholesome visiting, [?] courting, if we would have happy, lasting marriages.

"Unless right-thinking people look out for the well-being of our young folks they will be left alone to bring themselves to shame.

Thoughtful men will spend their leisure hours [in?] learning at a school of adult 269 13 education where real hospitality is shown.

"For myself, I am well most all the time as I am constantly using preventive measures that keeps one well. Such as plenty of fresh air, with its eleven health-giving qualities, good food properly [?], due attention to poisons within and without the body, and the right exercise.

With proper knowledge of hygiene one becomes his own best doctor. [Work?] is all absorbing and is conducive to right thinking, which makes far the best of health, other things being equal.

"As the hour approaches for classes, I find myself anticipating the prospect of sitting through part of the session. One by one the men arrive, then by twos and threes, and finally groups arrive together. Each finds individual welcome as he is told to 'come in and get something to eat, and help yourself to the coffee; there is more sugar back of the

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[plane?] and open up another can of [?], there's plenty. Grapes and tangerines over there, too, help yourself boys.'

"Some of these men are large and strong, others small tired and worn. The young and old share the same hunger and the same disappointments, but they may come here twice daily and find welcome, week in and week out, for that is the purpose of this little mission."